



10 DOWNING STREET
LONDON SW1A 2AA

17 July 2020

THE PRIME MINISTER

Dear Greg,

Thank you for your letter of 29 May regarding SAGE's assessment of the current two metre social distancing guidelines.

You will have seen that the Government undertook a review of the two metre social distancing guidance in June. The review was led by the Permanent Secretary to No10, and included the Government Chief Scientific Adviser, Chief Medical Officer and Chief Economic Adviser to HM Treasury. It considered the scientific evidence, the economic impact of social distancing, behavioural responses and international comparators. The review concluded that the current guidance should be changed to state that two metres or one metre with risk mitigation (where two metres is not viable) are acceptable.

The mitigations will depend on the workplace or setting. For example, on public transport, people must wear a face covering, as it is not always possible to stay two metres apart. In other spaces, mitigations could include installing screens, making sure people face away from each other, putting up handwashing facilities, minimising the amount of time people spend with somebody outside their household or bubble, and being outdoors. Having mitigations in place at one metre can be broadly equivalent in reducing transmission as staying two metres apart. We have set out COVID-secure guidance to help businesses take the measures that are right for them. This guidance, as well as the results of the two metre review, have been published online on www.gov.uk.

The advice on social distancing is linked to the overall Government assessment of the presence of the virus in society. We have made good progress so far, but must continue to be cautious as we bring our economy slowly out of hibernation. We will continue to be guided by science, and will adapt guidelines as appropriate as the virus evolves.

Thank you, once again, for writing. I am sending a copy of this letter to the Chairman of the Liaison Committee.

Yours ever
B